

Speaker Biography
Public Hearing-Seattle, Washington
February 7, 2006
The Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education

Charles H. Mitchell

Seattle Community College District Chancellor Dr. Charles H. Mitchell is a nationally recognized leader in higher education who is also distinguished by his long career of service in the Seattle region.

Mitchell had served as president of Seattle Central Community College from 1987 to 2003. Under his leadership, the college established a reputation for developing innovative curriculum and student services, which were acknowledged in a Time Magazine "College of the Year" Award in 2001.

Mitchell started his career with the Seattle Community Colleges as Dean of Students at Seattle Central in 1981. Earlier, he was Assistant to the Governor of Colorado and Affirmative Action Administrator for the government of King County. He had also served as Minority Affairs Director at Seattle University and Director of the Northwest Assistance Center, funded by the Education Department of Seattle University.

Mitchell grew up in Seattle and is a product of the city and state's education system. He attended T.T. Minor Elementary School, Meany Junior High and Garfield High School, where he served as vice president of the student body. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Washington, a master's degree from Seattle University and a doctorate of education from Brigham Young University.

An active member of the community, Mitchell serves on the boards of Seattle University, the Seattle Foundation, Virginia Mason Board of Governors, UW Tyee Board of Advisors, Seattle Art Museum, and the Breakfast Group, a Seattle association of African-American men that provides services to youth and other community-based organizations. He is a member of the Downtown Seattle Rotary and was recently named "Father of the Year" by the Seattle Chapter of the American Diabetes Association.

Locally, regionally and nationally, Mitchell has served on several boards, including the Board of Directors of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), AACC Presidents' Academy Executive Committee, Leadership Tomorrow of King County, Seattle Goodwill Games, King County United Way, King County Boys and Girls Clubs, and the Presidents' Roundtable, and also as Commissioner of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

Mitchell has received numerous awards recognizing his educational leadership nationally and statewide. They include the 2001 Phi Theta Kappa Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction; 1999 UW Minority Affairs Program Alumnus Award; 1997 UW Husky Legend Award; the Equity Award from the Trustees Association of Washington Community Colleges for his work to advance ethnic minorities in education; the Earl Norman Award for Outstanding Community College Administrator from the Washington State Administrators' Association; and a Leadership Award from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education.

During his years at the University of Washington, Mitchell played football with the UW Huskies and was a member of the winning 1961 Rose Bowl team. He was inducted into the Husky Football Hall of Fame in 1992. After graduation from the UW, he played professional football for six years with the Denver Broncos and Buffalo Bills.

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Mitchell is the 16th Chancellor in the history of the District, the largest two-year system in the state. The Chancellor is responsible for overall operations of the district, which educates 55,000 students at North Seattle Community College, Seattle Central Community College, South Seattle Community College, the Seattle Vocational Institute and five specialized training centers.